

REMARKS

The Office Action of March 14, 2006, has been carefully reviewed and these remarks are responsive thereto. Claims 47, 48, 50, 55, 56 and 57 have been amended. Claims 47 – 60, 62, 63, 65 and 66 remain pending. Support for the amendments may be found at least in Figure 62. Reconsideration and allowance of the instant application are respectfully requested.

Rejection of the Claims Under 35 U.S.C. 112

Claims 47, 48, 50, 55, and 56 stand rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph. Applicants have modified the recitation addressed by the Examiner to separate the “common latch circuit” from the “common node”. Support for this amendment may be found at least in Figure 62.

The common node, for example, in Figure 62 is node DTNij.

Applicants submit the rejection of claims 47, 48, 50, and 55-57 under section 112, second paragraph has been overcome.

Claim 57 stands rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph.

Applicants have amended claim 57 in accordance with the amendments of claims 47, 48, 50, and 55-56. Also, claim 57 has been further rejected as follows:

“Claim 57, line 8, ‘a third bit line connected to said second string line’ is unclear and confusing. How does the ‘second string [sic, bit] line’ in line 5 of claim 57 relate to the ‘second string [sic, ?] line’ in line 7 of claim 57? Should ‘third’ be changed to –second—for clarifying?...”

Applicants traverse the Examiner’s rejection of claim 57. The claim is not unclear. Claim 57 recites the following:

- 1) A first bit line
- 2) A second bit line
- 3) A third bit line
- 4) A fourth bit line
- 5) A first string line (connected to the first bit line)

- 6) A second string line (connected to the third bit line)

Applicants cannot modify the claim as suggested by the Examiner as the modification would make the claim confusing.

Rejection of the Claims Over Hemink et al.

Claims 47-60, 62, 63, and 65-66 stand rejected under 35 USC § 102(a) over Hemink et al. Applicants traverse.

Hemink shows only first and second bit lines. While Hemink uses the term third and fourth bit lines, these bit lines are in fact the same bit lines as the first and second bit lines respectively. This is in contrast to the claims above that distinguish the bit lines and distinctly claim the common node.

Accordingly, as now claim 47 clarifies the relationships between the common node and the latch circuit, the claim is allowable over Hemink et al.

Claims 48, 50, 55, 56 and 57 have been similarly amended and are believed allowable.

Dependent claims 49, 51-54, 58-60, 63, and 65-66 are believed allowable as they depend on allowable independent claims.

Rejection of the Claims Over Sakui

Claims 47-60, 62, 63, and 65-66 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) over Sakui. Applicants traverse.

With respect to Figure 38 of Sakui, a node of a latch circuit to which a bit line BLi is connected is different from a node of a latch circuit to which a bit line /BLi is connected. In other words, Sakui is the same as Hemink et al. in the point that bit lines are not connected to a common node of a common latch circuit as claimed.

As Sakui fails to disclose each and every feature of claim 47, the claim is allowable over Sakui.

Claims 48, 50, 55, 56 and 57 have been similarly amended and are believed allowable.

Dependent claims 49, 51-54, 58-60, 63, and 65-66 are believed allowable as they depend on allowable independent claims.

If any fees are required or if an overpayment is made, the Commissioner is authorized to debit or credit our Deposit Account No. 19-0733 accordingly.

Respectfully Submitted,

By: /Christopher R. Glembocki/
Christopher R. Glembocki
Reg. No. 38,800

BANNER & WITCOFF, LTD.
1001 G Street, N.W., 11th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20001
(202) 824-3000

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